

**Department of Health**  
**Chiropractic Quality Assurance Commission**  
**Interpretive Statement**

Revised – 10/18/11

<i>Title:</i> Chiropractors and Face Covering Exemptions	<i>Number:</i> 21-12-16
<i>References:</i>	<a href="#">Order of the Secretary of Health, 20-03.6, Face Coverings - Statewide</a>
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<i>Supersedes:</i>	N/A
<i>Approved By:</i>	David Folweiler, D.C., Chair, Chiropractic Quality Assurance Commission

Chiropractors may write exemptions for patients from the requirement to wear a face covering if the condition or disability that justifies the exemption is within the scope of practice of a chiropractor.

[The Secretary of Health has issued Order 20-03.06 – Face Coverings Statewide \(Order 20-03.6\) that requires every person](#) in Washington State, including those that are vaccinated, to **wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth** when they are in a place where any person from outside their house is present or in a place that is generally accessible to any person from outside their household, subject to certain exceptions and exemptions.

One of the exemptions to the general requirement to wear a face covering includes:

People with a medical condition, mental health condition, developmental or cognitive condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, people with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. (Order 20-03.6 on Page 4.)

The Chiropractic Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) has received an inquiry asking whether chiropractors are legally authorized to write exemptions for a patient “with a medical condition, mental health condition, developmental or cognitive condition or disability” that prevents them from wearing a face covering.

The Commission interprets RCW 18.25 and Order 20-03.6 to permit chiropractors to write exemptions for a patient from the requirement to wear a face covering only if the condition or disability that justifies the exemption is within the scope of practice of a chiropractor. The scope of practice for a chiropractor is defined in [RCW 18.25.005](#) and includes “the diagnosis or analysis and care or treatment of the vertebral subluxation complex and its effects, articular dysfunction, and musculoskeletal disorders” ([RCW 18.25.005\(1\)](#)).

The Commission will not be identifying conditions that could exempt an individual from the face covering requirement in this interpretive statement. Chiropractors who have specific questions about whether a condition qualifies for an exemption from the face covering requirement should review [Order 20-03.06](#), [RCW 18.25.005](#), and/or consult with their own legal counsel.

The Commission would also remind chiropractors that writing an exemption from the face covering requirement that is fraudulent, dishonest, misrepresents facts, or is based on a condition outside the scope of practice of a chiropractor may result in disciplinary action.



December 16, 2021

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**Approved By: David Folweiler, DC, Chair**

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**Date**